in the State of Punjab. Out of these 118 persons, 56 were Pakistani nationals.

86 such persons were killed in encounters in these States during this period, while the others were apprehended and action is being taken against them as per the law.

Iranian Foreign Minister's visit to India

2739. SHRI AJIT P. JOGI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the foreign minister of Iran visited India recently;

(b) if so, the bilateral and multilateral issues that figured in his talks with Indian leaders and the broad outcome thereof;

(c) whether any areas have been identified for the cooperation between the two countries; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) The Deputy Foreign Ministers of Iran, Mr. Manouchehr Mottaki, Mr. Aladdin Broujerdi and Mr. Abbas Maleki visited India from March 30—April, 01, November 08—10 and December 14—17, 1993 respectively.

(b) to (d) Discussions during these visits focussed on issues arising out of bilateral cooperation. The two sides devoted attention to the prospects of expansion of trade and India's participation in economic projecs in Iran, apart from reviewing the progress in the implementation of the decisions of the Indo-Iranian Joint Commission. India and Iran have agreed to cooperate in the multilateral forums on issues of mutual concern. These talks with Iran which are part of the sustained high level dialogue between the two countries have also facilitated a useful exchange of views on the regional and international developments.

Economic ties with Gulf States

2740. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are jointly exploring the possibilities of deepening economic ties with the Gulf States of Bahrain, Oman and Qatar;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether India and Oman have agreed to organise a business seminar in which potential entrepreneurs from the entire Gulf region are proposed to participate; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There is an inter-governmental Joint Commission with Bahrain and Joint Committee with Qatar which meet periodically to review and examine ways and means of expanding and diversifying economic relations with these countries. They last met in 1991 and 1988 respectively, and Government has been requesting these countries for another meeting. During Prime Minister's visit to Oman in June, 1993 an Agreement on Cooperation in Economic, Trade and Technical Cooperation was signed, which inter-alia provides for setting up of a Joint Commission at the Ministerial level. Action has been instituted with Oman on agreements to set up a subsea pipeline for natural gas to India, for two joint venture refineries in India and a fertiliser plant in Oman.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) It had been proposed to jointly organise a seminar in December 1992 but was postponed by mutual consent due to inadequate response from potential participants.